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COLLECTING BRACHYCISTIDINE FEMALES

(Hymenoptera: Tiphiidae)

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This spring (1952) a collecting party of the California Insect Survey, Division of Entomology & Parasitology, University of California, composed of P. D. Hurd, Jr., G. A. Marsh, P. H. Timberlake and myself, made a considerable effort to collect nocturnal mutillids and tiphiids on the California deserts. The results of this effort were gratifying for six brachycistidine females and numerous mutillid females were taken, as well as a great many males of these two groups.

The first female brachycistidine was taken at Hopkins Well, Riverside County, crawling out of the sand on a sand dune sparsely covered with vegetation. Two additional females were collected about one mile north of Plaster City, Imperial County. Both of these insects were found on fine sand in an area covered with the typical desert flora. The other three females were collected in a sand dune region a short distance east of Borego, San Diego County. Two of them were taken on the leeward side of a road,

possibly blown there by the strong wind, which was prevailing at the time of our collecting.

The only generalities that can be made are that all the female brachycistidines were found on fine, unconsolidated sand at night. Whether or not these insects are partial to sandy country is uncertain, however, for we looked primarily only where there was fine sand, the small insects being more readily seen there than on coarser sand and gravel, where they could more easily hide in the shadows. On the other hand, evidence supporting their preference for a sandy situation is given by Mickel and Krombein (1942:652), who cite the capture of a female in the sand dune area of San Francisco, California, and by Hurd and Rozen, who, subsequent to the spring trip, collected two specimens in the sand dunes of Antioch, California.

The method of collecting both the tiphiid and mutillid female was a simple one. Each member of the party, using a Coleman lantern, walked about the sandy region and picked up the females by hand. The smaller females, especially those of the genus *Chyphotes*, were readily captured by moistening a finger and lightly applying it to the dorsal surface of the insect. None of the brachycistidine females were taken coming to light, if for no other reason than because we were continuously moving about. However, it is certain that at least some of them are attracted to light, for in addition to the information provided by Mickel and Krombein *(ibid.)* H. E. Evans and P. D. Hurd on their Mexican trip of 1951 secured several specimens which came to a stationary Coleman lantern. Furthermore, one of the Antioch specimens was found at the base of a Coleman lantern which had been resting on the sand for a considerable length of time.

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Range extension of Pholisora libya Scudder (Lepid., Hesperiidae): On August 13, 1951, a single slightly-worn female was taken about 13 miles northwest of Coalinga, Calif., on Highway 33, as it flew along a dry wash by the roadside. This is, as far as I can ascertain, the first record for this typically mohavian species from the west side of the San Joaquin Valley.—J. W. Tilden.